

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 21-4, 26-28, 30 and 31 are presented for consideration. Claims 21, 30 and 31 are independent. Claim 29 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 21-23, 26-28, 30 and 31 have been amended to clarify features of the invention. Support for these changes can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 21, 23, 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,864,130 to Kahn et al. Claims 22 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Kahn et al. patent. Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Kahn et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,460,770 to Kucharczyk. Claims 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Kahn et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,303,398 to Georigk. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach many features of the present invention, as previously recited in claims 21-24 and 26-31. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, Applicant submits that independent claims 21, 30 and 31, for example, as presented, amplify the distinctions between the present invention and the cited art.

In one aspect of the present invention, independent claim 21 recites an apparatus used for manufacturing a device. The apparatus includes a container to contain a substrate, a transfer

system which has a holding member for holding the substrate and a driving mechanism for driving the holding member to transfer the substrate from the container, a reading system which optically reads a code formed on the substrate in a transfer process performed by the transfer system, at least a portion of the reading system being located on at least one of the holding member and the driving mechanism, and a process system which performs a process using the substrate based on information of the code read by the reading system.

In another aspect of the present invention, independent claim 30 recites an exposure apparatus including a container to contain a substrate, a transfer system which has a holding member for holding the substrate and a driving mechanism for driving the holding member to transfer the substrate from the container, a reading system which optically reads a code formed on the substrate in a transfer process performed by the transfer system, at least a portion of the reading system being located on at least one of the holding member and the driving mechanism, and an exposure system which performs an exposure process using the substrate based on information of the code read by the reading system.

In a further aspect of the present invention, independent claim 31 recites a method used for manufacturing a device. The method includes steps of transferring a substrate using a transfer system which has a holding member for holding the substrate and a driving mechanism for driving the holding member to transfer the substrate from a container which contains the substrate, optically reading a code formed on the substrate using a reading system in a transfer process performed by the transfer system, at least a portion of the reading system being located on at least one of the holding member and the driving mechanism, and performing a process using the substrate based on information of the code read in the reading step.

By such an arrangement, in the present invention, the productivity can be improved, since the reading system can read the code formed on the substrate during the transferring process.

Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest such features of the present invention, as recited in independent claims 21, 30 and 31.

The Kahn et al. patent, as shown in Figure 1 and as is discussed in that patent at column 2, line 46, to column 3, line 20, teaches that wafers 16 are aligned along a presentation axis α , with the front surface of each wafer being partially exposed. Also, a laser scanner 30 is mounted on a track system 34, which is generally parallel with the presentation axis, so that the bar codes on the wafers 16 may be successively scanned. Applicant submits, however, that the Kahn et al. patent fails to teach or suggest anything regarding transferring a substrate from a container containing the substrate by using a transfer system having at least a portion of a reading system, and reading a code formed on the substrate in a transfer process by the transfer system. Applicant submits, therefore, that the Kahn et al. patent does not teach or suggest salient features of Applicant's present invention, as recited in independent claims 21, 30 and 31.

Applicant further submits that the remaining art cited fails to cure the deficiencies noted above with respect to the Kahn et al. patent.

The Examiner relies on the Kucharczyk patent for teaching a bi-directional bar code scanning system that includes a bar code label receiving device 250, in which black elements 252 and white elements 254 comprise a bar code, which are affixed to one side of a transparent or semi-transparent substrate 256. Thus, the Kucharczyk patent merely teaches that a code can be formed in a transparent substrate.

The Examiner relies on the Georigk patent for teaching a method and a system of managing wafers in a semiconductor device production facility in which a wafer sorter 5 is supplied with semiconductor wafers 11, each having a wafer identification mark 10 near a defined position. The Examiner asserts that the identification mark 10 may contain any desired information, and may take forms that are readable by a machine or a computer, such as a bar code, character strings, and the like. The Examiner concludes that the Georigk patent teaches a system wherein a bar code contains information about different processes for a semiconductor wafer.

Applicant submits, however, that neither the Kucharczyk patent nor the Georigk patent teaches or suggests any relationship between a transfer system and a reading system, in the manner of the present invention recited in independent claims 21, 30 and 31. Applicant submits, therefore, that these patents add nothing to the teachings of the Kahn et al. patent that would render obvious Applicant's present invention, as recited in independent claims 21, 30 and 31.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 21, 30 and 31, is patentably defined over the cited art.

Dependent claims 22-24 and 26-28 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent claim 21. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicant further submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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